

### Remarks

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 19-24 are currently pending and stand rejected. Claims 20 and 23 have been amended. Applicants assert that the claims are now in condition for allowance as set forth more fully below.

### 103 Rejections

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Pruett. It is stated that Pruett discloses all of the elements. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Initially, some points in the Advisory action will be addressed. The Examiner states that because malfunctions are grouped for a cause, and costs for each malfunction are tracked, it is possible to determine all costs for each cause. However, Applicants assert that even if it is true that there are costs associated with separate malfunctions, where the costs are tracked and where the malfunctions are grouped such that it would be possible to determine all of the costs of the cause, there still is no teaching of billing the entity responsible for the cause for all of the separate malfunctions. The Examiner is making a leap based on teachings of the present application that such is the case. Applicants assert that the Examiner's assertion in the second paragraph of the Advisory Action is not supported by the reference for at least these reasons.

Additionally, Applicants further point out that the whole point of the SA system of Pruett is to eliminate costs associated with the grouped malfunctions by correlating alarms so that there is no need to dispatch technicians. Thus, Applicants assert that Pruett does not disclose costs for multiple malfunctions per cause because by using alarms to find the malfunctions and using the SA to correlate the alarms, there are no multiple malfunction costs associated with one cause. Applicants assert that the Examiner's assertion in the second paragraph of the Advisory Action is not supported by the reference for at least these additional reasons.

In addition to the reasoning above indicating that claims 20 and 23 and their dependents are allowable over Pruett, Applicants have also further amended. Amended claim 20 recites a method of processing reports of malfunctions received by a company

having a dispatch division and a billing division. Among other things, amended claim 20 recites utilizing the information, by the billing division, to generate a bill to the entity other than the first subscriber that includes costs incurred at least for diagnosing the malfunction at the first subscriber location by looking up the range of line numbers associated with the cause for which the entity is responsible, finding that the first line number falls within the range, looking up the costs incurred for the first line number, and including the costs incurred for the first line number on the bill to the entity.

These recitations are not disclosed in the cited references. Again, while Pruett may group alarms to avoid dispatching technicians where the alarms are related to a cause already being addressed, there is no disclosure whatsoever in Pruett that such a grouping is used for billing purposes. The grouping is instead for making the repair process more efficient by reducing the dispatch of technicians. Pruett fails to disclose that there is an entity responsible for the cause, that there are costs associated with diagnosis at a location other than where the cause is located, and that the entity is billed by looking up the range of line numbers affected, finding the first line number, and including those costs on the bill. Pruett discloses little in on the subject of the billing function and certainly does not disclose such a look-up for purposes of billing an entity.

Amended claim 23 has similar recitations. Amended claim 23 recites, among other things, utilizing the information, by the billing division, to generate a bill to the entity other than the first subscriber and the second subscriber that includes the costs incurred for diagnosing the malfunction at the first subscriber location, for diagnosing the malfunction at the second subscriber location, and for repairing the cause by looking up the range of line numbers associated with the cause for which the entity is responsible, finding that the first line number and the second line numbers fall within the range, looking up the costs incurred for the first line number and the second line number, and including the costs incurred for the first line number and the second line number on the bill to the entity.

As discussed above, these recitations are not disclosed in the cited references. There is not disclosure of Pruett billing an entity by performing a look-up of the range of line numbers. The grouping is just used for improving the efficiency of the dispatch of technicians, and it requires knowledge of the present application, where an entity is

responsible for the cause, and where the range of line numbers allows the look-up to find that there are costs at both the first and second locations that are billed to the entity.

Applicants assert that for the reasons discussed above, the independent claims 20 and 23 and allowable over Pruett, and that the dependent claims depend from allowable base claims and are also allowable for at least the same reasons.

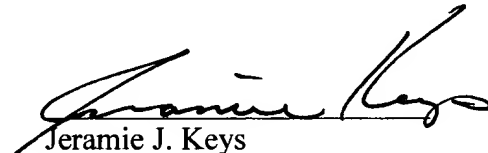
#### Conclusion

Applicants assert that the application including claims 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 19-24 is now in condition for allowance. Applicants request reconsideration in view of the amendments and remarks above and further request that a Notice of Allowability be provided. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact the undersigned.

No fees are believed due beyond the fee for continued examination. However, please charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-3025.

Respectfully submitted,

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